The Logic of "(name of the article)" Voluntary Simplicity” part 1

Citation information: Duane Elgin and Arnold Mitchell Summer 1977 Co-Evolution Quarterly—Whole Earth Catalog.

1) The main purpose of Part 1 is to introduce the concept of voluntary simplicity as a means to deal with critical environmental and social issues facing societies around the world.

2) The key question that the author is addressing is: How do we go about achieving a life style shift from destructive consumption to long term sustainability?

3) The most important information in this article is the detailed discussion of the values associated with the concept of voluntary simplicity including: frugality of consumption, environmental concerns, work on a more human scale and focus on achieving human potential.

4) The main inferences/conclusions in this article are: The forces driving the values of voluntary simplicity range from personal concerns to critical national and social issues.

5) The key concept(s) we need to understand in this article are:

1. Material simplicity—sustainable lifestyle by limiting consumption to needs
2. Human scale—reduce size and complexity of institutions to create human community in work and living spaces.
3. Self-determination—Less dependence on large institutions for meeting needs of community.
4. Ecological Awareness—limited resources and pollution threaten stability of society as well as the health of the planet
5. Personal growth—Focus on personal development rather than consumer lifestyle as standard for successful life.

6) The main assumption(s) underlying the author's thinking is a change in lifestyle is the first step to creating a more human, sustainable society and culture.

7a) If we take this line of reasoning seriously, the implications are everyone needs to begin to evaluate what they really need to live the good life. Making the crucial distinction between actual needs and wants is critical to the process. Factors like other people and the environment also need to be part of our thinking about this point.

7b) If we fail to take this line of reasoning seriously, the implications are we will continue down the path to fail to have values that actually lead to the good life and this could lead to a disintegration of society.

8) The main point(s) of view presented in this article are environmental movements, critics of consumer lifestyle, conscious movement, spiritual values of several religious traditions, etc.—This article represents both a critic of consumer culture values and an alternative lifestyle that they argue is more human and more sustainable.

The Logic of "(name of the article)" Voluntary Simplicity” part 2

1) The main purpose of Part 2 is to examine the patterns of the practice of voluntary simplicity in American society of the 1970’s when the article was written.

2) The key question that the author is addressing is: What are the social patterns of people who practice voluntary simplicity in relationship to the general population?

3) The most important information in this article is the results of studying the patterns of voluntary simplicity. Four degrees: full voluntary simplicity—Partial voluntary simplicity—Sympathizers—Indifferent/unaware or opposed.

4) The main inferences/conclusions in this article are: The development of the voluntary simplicity movement will be in large part based on the actions and attitudes of the large (1/3-1/2 of population) block of sympathizers.

5) The key concept(s) we need to understand in this article are: voluntary simplicity values as outlined in part one.

6) The main assumption(s) underlying the author's thinking is a change in lifestyle like that of voluntary simplicity provides solutions to pressing social and environmental problems.

7a) If we take this line of reasoning seriously, the implications are everyone needs to begin to evaluate what they really need to live the good life. Making the crucial distinction between actual needs and wants is critical to the process. Factors like other people and the environment also need to be part of our thinking about this point.

7b) If we fail to take this line of reasoning seriously, the implications the voluntary simplicity movement will fail to develop and we will have lost an important chance to actually solve some pressing social (poverty) and environmental (diminishing resources like oil) issues that are facing modern industrial society.

8) The main point(s) of view presented in this article are environmental movements, critics of consumer lifestyle, conscious movement, etc.—This article represents both a critic of consumer culture values and an alternative lifestyle that they argue is more human and more sustainable.

The Logic of "(name of the article)" Voluntary Simplicity” part 3

1) The main purpose of Part 3 is to examine how the adoption of the voluntary simplicity lifestyle by a majority of people would affect society.

2) The key question that the author is addressing is: What implications for society of the voluntary simplicity movement?

3) The most important information in this article is four social possibilities envisioned by the authors:

1. Technological salvation
2. Descent into Social Chaos
3. Benign authoritarianism
4. Humanistic Transformation

4) The main inferences/conclusions in this article are: The development of the voluntary simplicity movement could lead to the development of possible future #4 which is the one the authors believe offers the best future for humans. They devote several pages to arguing this point by detailing how that society would function using the voluntary simplicity values.

5) The key concept(s) we need to understand in this article are:

Material abundance versus material sufficiency

Conspicuous consumption

6) The main assumption(s) underlying the author's thinking is a change in lifestyle like that of voluntary simplicity provides solutions to pressing social and environmental problems.

7a) If we take this line of reasoning seriously, the implications are everyone needs to begin to evaluate what they really need to live the good life. Shift from material abundance to material sufficiency Making the crucial distinction between actual needs and wants is critical to the process. Factors like other people and the environment also need to be part of our thinking about this point.

7b) If we fail to take this line of reasoning seriously, the implications are we will continue down the path to ruined societies and degraded environment in which no one rich or poor will be able to live the good life.

8) The main point(s) of view presented in this article are environmental movements, critics of consumer lifestyle, conscious movement etc.—This article represents both a critic of consumer culture values and an alternative lifestyle that they argue is more human and more sustainable.